

THE MAKING OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION IN THE CONFEDERACY.
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That necessity which is the progenitor of nearly all revolutionizing inventions bore with ~~vigor~~ upon the men who so ardently espoused the Confederate cause. Particularly was this true in regard to arms and ammunitions of which there was such dirth in the beginning. Although John Floyd was accused of dispensing arms to the south while Secretary of State under President Buchanan, this accusation was refuted by Mr. Buchanan himself. The only grounds for such an unjust accusation were that in 1859 the Armory, located at Springfield, Massachusetts, became so crowded that the War Department ordered one fifth of the arms to be distributed in the southern states. Five southern Arsenals, Charleston, South Carolina, Fayetteville, North Carolina, Augusta, Georgia, Mount Vernon, Louisiana, and Baton Rouge, Louisiana, received these arms which consisted of sixty five thousand percussion muskets, forty thousand old flintlock muskets which had been changed to percussion, and ten thousand rifled muskets.

In 1860 the War Department again distributed about ten thousand muskets but the south received less than three thousand of these.

After the election of Abraham Lincoln, some of the southern states made requisition on the government for arms, and the government, recognizing the legality of the request did not hesitate to grant it. So late as January 29, 1861 Governor Ellis requisitioned the War Department for three hundred and thirty-four long-range rifles which were shipped to Raleigh without question. Why should there be a question? North Carolina had helped to supply these materials, and was calling for what was her own.

At the beginning of hostilities it has been proven that the south had at its disposal only about 150,000 shoulder arms , and that only about 20,000 of these were modern . The new guns had been made at Harper's Ferry and Springfield . The remainder consisted of a heterogeneous collection of Revolutionary and War of 1812 relics, together with a few Hall rifles and carbines . With such inadequate supplies did a hopeful people go forth to conquer the world .

Mr. Davis in that superb book , The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government , says, " The necessities of the times called into existence new branches of manufactures and gave a fresh impulse to the activity of those previously in operation, " so that by the end of the first year of the war the army was far better equipped than at the beginning.

To encourage the manufacture of small arms a bill was passed by the Confederate Congress in 1862 which proved conclusively how urgent was the need of such a continuation of these activities.

Early in 1861 occurred one of those fortunate events which so encouraged the Confederate forces in the beginning of the war , and caused the feeling of hopefulness and buoyancy which sustained them at a later time. The commander of the United states arsenal at Harper's Ferry hearing of the approach of the Virginia Secession troops , set fire to the building , and hurried away. The residents of Harper's Ferry assisted the troops to extinguish the fire , and most of the machinery for manufacturing arms was rescued, as well as a large quantity of material which was only partly burned. This machinery was divided , part being sent to Fayetteville, North Carolina where there was plenty of steam power, and the remainder sent to Richmond , Virginia for making the long rifle musket. This Richmond plant was set up under the direction

of Lieut.- Colonel J. H. Burton , master armorer of Enfield , England. This armory began operations in September, 1861 , and sometimes made as many as one thousand rifles a month , a magnificent record for those times. Much of the material rescued at Harper's Ferry was used in these ~~rifle~~ rifles , and is the explanation of a seemingly queer gun discovered recently which has ^{C.} S . Richmond, Virginia stamped on the lock plate, and U. S. on the ^{butt} ~~gun~~ plate .

The material sent to Fayetteville was used for making short Harper's Ferry rifles , and they sometimes made as many as four hundred a month. Here they cut out the "U. S." and used "C. S. A." , cutting the "S" upside down. In March , 1865 when Sherman's army was approaching this machinery was taken to Egypt and hidden in an old mine.

The first private firm given an arms making contract by the Confederate Government was McElwain and Co., Holly Springs, Mississippi¹⁸⁶¹. This was an old foundry , known before the war as the Marshall County Manufacturing Company. In July , 1861 the Confederate War Department received notice that this firm was making machinery for the construction of Mississippi rifles and gave them a contract for 30,000 rifles , the output promised being one hundred a day. In the same month Sherman's forces occupied Mount Holly , but the machinery had been safely moved to either Macon or Atlanta.

George Washington Rains , who was educated at West Point, and served with distinction in the Mexican war , resigned his commission to enter business in Augusta, Georgia. At the beginning of the war he established the famous Confederate Powder Works of which he remained in charge until the close of the war. He has given much valuable information on this subject in " A History of the Confederate Powder Works " , written some years after .


In May, 1862, three men, Yarbrough, Short and Briscoe bought a tract of one hundred acres of land near Tyler, Texas, erected a large brick building, and purchased machinery for the manufacture of arms. The Texas Military Board gave them a contract for 5,000 rifles, but they turned out only about 1,000.

When Little Rock, Arkansas, was evacuated in 1863 the gun machinery from that arsenal was moved to Arkadelphia where they continued to make arms. When this place was threatened, the machinery was again moved this time to Tyler, Texas where it was combined with that of the plant already established, the two becoming the head quarters of the Trans-Mississippi Department. Colonel Hill was put in charge of the works, and about two hundred men and boys were employed. They made the guns known as the "Texas Rifles". When the Trans-Mississippi Department was disbanded in 1865 about 2,500 guns were turned over to Shelby's Division, Shelby afterwards taking them to Mexico where he sold the entire lot. It would seem that, ~~that~~ then, as now, these neighbors had a weakness for fire-arms.

Cook and Brothers had a famous factory in New Orleans where they manufactured rifles of the Enfield model before the war. Their output was about two hundred each week. These rifles were principally for the use of the Cavalry. During the war they used maple and walnut extensively for the stocks, and household brasses for the mountings.

A large plant of the Shakanoosa Arms Manufacturing Co. was located for awhile at Rome, Georgia, but this was burned. Then the firm moved to Adairsville, Georgia where ~~new~~ they continued the manufacture until the battle of Chicamauga when they were again forced to flee to Dawson, Georgia.

In 1856 one George W. Morse was granted a patent for a metallic cartridge breech-loading rifle. When the war began Morse was superintendent of the arsenal at Nashville, Tennessee. When he was forced to leave Nashville he went to Greenville, South Carolina, where he converted muskets



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into breech loaders. But these guns required an especial cartridge which it was sometimes difficult to secure , therefore they were not practical for general use.

Breech loading carbines modeled after Sharp's rifles were made in Richmond , Virginia ~~by~~ by S. C. Robinson, Arms Manufacture. These were not always satisfactory but it is known that they made as many as 5,700 guns which were used in the Confederate army. There was also a carbine factory at Tallassee, Alabama, but the maximum number released in any one year from this factory was 6,000 guns.

At Clarksville , Virginia some old tobacco factories , warehouses and other buildings were converted into workshops for the making of arms and ammunition , and ~~there~~ tremendous service was rendered the Confederates by the output of these improvised armories.

The firm of Mendenhall , James and Garner , located at Greensboro, North Carolina by its central location proved of great value. Other armories in North Carolina were located at Jamestown and Asheville.

Georgia had armories , besides those already mentioned, at Milledgeville, the old state capitol , ~~and~~ Macon , and Columbus.

Montgomery , Alabama , manufactured a number of rifles of the Enfield model.

In the beginning of the war the Southern states had no difficulty in buying munitions from northern armories. Some of these were received and proved unsatisfactory, while later on others were seized by northern authorities.

In May , 1861 , Major Caleb Huse was sent to England on a most successful mission for the purchase of arms. Besides a large number of Enfields purchased in England , he secured 10,000 rifles from the Imperial Arsenal in Vienna. Other arms secured in England included some Whitworth



and Kerr rifles which did splendid work for the regiments which secured them.

The depleted store of arms was often replenished by raids on the enemy . Some of the captured guns were useless because the Confederates were unable to supply the proper loadings , but before the close of the war many of her mechanics had learned to make metallic cartridges . The strenuous times developed the inventive genius , as well as the moral courage of these men. Often the arms captured needed repairing . Much of this work was done at Richmond , Virginia, although every hamlet in the south boasted its own locksmith.

Another source of supply , not to be overlooked was the donation of private individuals . In most of the states the Governors issued proclamations asking for these donations . In some instances the response was very generous , every imaginable variety of sporting , and household gun being sent in . The result was a museum of more interest than service. ~~Re~~ Many of these were later converted into modern guns in all except appearance. Plants for this purpose were established at Nashville, Pulaski and Memphis , Tennessee. That at Nashville fell into the hands of the Federals in 1862 .

The establishment of Samuel Sutherland in Richmond was perhaps the largest and most successful repair shop in the country. It was here that Kentucky sporting rifles had their five feet barrels sawed off , and were then converted into cavalry carbines, *and many other work -*
defaul parts performed

No record of the ~~supply~~ military supplies of the Confederate Army would be complete which did not make especial mention of the rifle bullets of lead moulded by the hands of the women and children around their own firesides , after the arduous tasks of the day were over. Hundreds of these bullets ~~were~~ found their way into the hands of the soldiers , and so



replenished the often scanty store.

Lamar Fontaine said in one of his remarkable tales of war time experience that he once killed " sixty yankees in sixty minutes " with a rifle . Many experiences , perhaps a little less sanguinary , could be related by ~~men~~ men participating in a struggle , not for extermination (as modern warfare seems to be verging on) but for the establishment of principles which had been recognized since the formation of the government .

Many valuable sources of supply have not, and could not , be mentioned in a paper of this length , but every atom of information about these vital concerns of the most marvelous army ~~that~~ ^{which} ever marched is valuable , and should not be rejected because it is not complete.

"Mirador"

has later been the
Charlotte

